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ABSTRACT

This paper is the third in a series of reports that examine the impact of No Child Left Behind, the newly revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act, on state policy and policymaking. It focuses on teaching quality. The first section explains that a highly qualified teacher is one who has been fully licensed or certified by the state and not had any certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis. The second section discusses qualifications of paraprofessionals, which include having completed at least 2 years of postsecondary study, obtained an associate's (or higher) degree, or met a rigorous standard of quality. The third section examines the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund to increase the number of principals, assistant principals, and highly qualified teachers in schools, explaining how state education departments must use these funds to accomplish various tasks (e.g., reforming teacher and principal licensure or certification, recruiting highly qualified teachers, and reforming tenure systems). The fourth section discusses professional development using Title I funds, describing professional development in such areas as effective instructional strategies, improving student behavior, and involving parents in education. Each section includes key policy questions for state policymakers and implications for states. (Contains 19 references.) (SM)

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No Child Left Behind Policy Brief: Teaching Quality

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Education Commission of the States

2002

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Education Commission of the States

No Child Left Behind Policy Brief

Teaching Quality

By Twanna LaTrice Hill

This is the third in a series of ECS reports examining the impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the newly revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act on state policy and policymaking. Other reports will focus on accountability, school choice, leadership, literacy and state information systems.

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The newly reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) contains several provisions related to teaching quality. These requirements will challenge states to examine their teacher certification processes; ensure teachers have mastery of their content areas; create high standards for paraprofessionals; develop mechanisms for tracking and disclosing information on teacher qualifications; and promote ongoing professional development for teachers. There are also provisions that will encourage states and school districts to reform their teacher certification processes and invest in teacher recruitment.

Qualifications of Teachers

ESEA 2001 requires each state receiving funds under Title I, Part A, to develop a plan to ensure all teachers of core academic subjects in the state are "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Core academic subjects include English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography. More immediately, ESEA 2001 mandates that all new teachers working in programs supported by Title I, Part A, be "highly qualified" by the start of the 2002-03 school year.

A "highly qualified" teacher is one who has been fully licensed or certified by the state and not had any certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis. Elementary school teachers must also pass a state test demonstrating subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics and other areas of any basic elementary school curriculum; middle or secondary school teachers must, in addition to being fully licensed or certified, demonstrate competency in each subject they teach. They can do this in one of three ways:

- Passing a state test
- Meeting the requirements of a state evaluation standard used to judge competency
- Having completed an academic major or coursework equivalent to a major, a graduate degree or advanced certification.

Advanced certification or advanced credentialing can be obtained through high-quality, professional teacher enhancement programs such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the National Council on Teaching Quality or other nationally recognized certification or credentialing organizations.

Detailed examination of the definition of a "highly qualified" teacher can be found in the ECS publication, *No State Left Behind: The Challenges and Opportunities of ESEA 2001*, http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=html/Special/ESEA_main.htm.

ESEA 2001 also requires states to prepare an annual report card that includes the professional qualifications of teachers; the percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional credentials; and the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers. Parents of children who attend Title I schools must be notified by the school district that they are entitled to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s), including, at a minimum:

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- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas taught
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status
- The baccalaureate degree of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the subject area of the certification or degree
- Whether their child is provided service by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, schools that receive funds under Title I, Part A, also must provide timely notice to a parent whose child has been assigned to or taught by, for four or more weeks, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Finally, ESEA 2001 attempts to address the issue of equity. State departments of education must submit a plan that includes the steps it will take to ensure poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, uncertified or out-of-field teachers.

Implications for States

All states require their licensed or certified teachers to possess a bachelor's degree, and Title II already requires states to collect data on the certification status of their teachers. Those states currently requiring candidates to pass tests for certification will need to ensure that tests for elementary school teachers encompass subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics and other areas of any basic elementary school curriculum, and that middle and high school teachers have passed a competency test for each subject taught.

There are several states that do not administer tests to assess teachers' subject-matter competency. These states will be pressed to develop and administer the appropriate tests to potential new elementary, middle and secondary Title I teachers who have not completed an academic major or coursework equivalent to a major, a graduate degree or advanced certification by the beginning of the 2002-03 school year.

Many states will need to examine the qualifications of current teachers to determine whether they meet the definition of being "highly qualified." Most states will have to develop a state evaluation standard to assess the subject-matter competency of current teachers who have not been evaluated for their subject-matter competency in the past or have not completed an academic major or additional coursework as described above.

Clearly, the intent of the law is to ensure teachers have expertise in the subjects they teach. It defines an out-of-field teacher as a teacher who is teaching an academic subject or a grade level for which the teacher is not highly qualified. Studies have shown that almost one-third of all high school math teachers do not possess a major or a minor in math or a related discipline, and that more than half of all high school history students are taught by teachers who have neither a major nor a minor in history (Ingersoll, 1998). The ESEA

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requirement that all teachers be highly qualified is designed to eliminate out-of-field teaching by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

The requirement that all teachers be fully licensed or certified by the end of the 2005-06 school year is at least as important in the law as subject-matter guarantees. Forty-seven states indicated in their 2001 Title II reports that less than 100% of their teachers were fully certified or licensed. This means that these states must address their teacher certification practices to comply with the new law. States that have relied heavily on emergency certification, waivers or provisional licenses to circumvent full certification of all their teachers can use funds allocated under Title II for professional development to help all their teachers – new, provisional and existing – become highly qualified.

Several states issue public report cards that indicate teachers' years of experience, their certification or licensure status and, if certified, whether they are teaching in their area of certification. States that do not issue such report cards will have to develop them. Other states will need to begin tracking and collecting new information to supplement the annual reports they already prepare, since ESEA 2001 requires annual state report cards to include the professional qualifications of teachers; the percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional credentials in the state; and the percentage of classes in the state not taught by highly qualified teachers.

It also will be necessary for states to collect data on the distribution of their teacher workforce to determine to what extent poor and minority children are being taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, uncertified or out-of-field teachers. Once that data is collected, states will need to create a plan that outlines the steps they will take to ensure an equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers throughout the state.

This particular ESEA requirement is based on the recognition that all children deserve access to high-quality teachers. Research shows that students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are more likely to be taught by teachers who do not have a major or a minor in their field, and by new and inexperienced teachers (Ingersoll, 1996). The practice of assigning beginning teachers to high-poverty and high-minority schools is commonplace. Experienced teachers often are able to secure their pick of assignments, and therefore avoid teaching in the most challenging environments. While some argue that the most experienced and qualified teachers should teach the most advanced students, others maintain that those students most in need of highly qualified instructors should benefit from the experience and expertise of our best teachers. ESEA 2001 promotes state efforts to ensure an equitable distribution of high-quality educators.

Key Policy Questions

Here are some questions for policymakers to consider:

- What percentage of teachers in your state are "highly qualified" as defined by the law?
- How many teachers in your state are teaching under emergency certificates or other waivers? Does your state have a system to track these data accurately?

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- How will your state ensure all new Title I teachers hired after the beginning of the 2002-03 school year meet the new requirements? Has your state analyzed what this means in terms of recruiting and preparing new teachers?
- How will your state ensure all teachers meet the definition of highly qualified by 2005-06? In what ways would your teacher certification process and policies need to change (including testing and performance measures)?
- Do your state's certification/licensing procedures guarantee strong subject-matter competence? If so, how?
- How will your state strike a balance between ensuring all teachers are highly qualified and the need to cope with teacher shortages?
- How will your state ensure teachers entering the classroom through alternative routes to certification meet the new requirements?
- How will your state attempt to balance the percentage of highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff and low-income schools and the percentage of such teachers in more affluent, easier-to-staff schools?
- How will your state discourage out-of-field teaching?

Qualifications of Paraprofessionals

ESEA 2001 concerns itself not only with the qualifications of teachers, but also with the qualifications of paraprofessionals. It requires that each state receiving funds under Title I, Part A, develop a plan to ensure all new paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I funds have met one of the following requirements:

- Completed at least two years of postsecondary study
- Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree
- Met a rigorous "standard of quality" and can demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics by passing a formal state or local academic assessment. (The term "standard of quality" is not defined in the law. Although the implication is that this standard is to be established by the state, rulemaking may further clarify this provision.)

Current paraprofessionals must meet one of the above requirements no later than January 2006. In addition, all paraprofessionals working in Title I-supported schools, regardless of hiring date, must have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.

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Teaching Quality (cont'd)

Implications for States

Many states have not established any requirements as to the qualifications of paraprofessionals. It is commonly left to school districts to establish minimum requirements for paraprofessionals, including whether or not a high school diploma is necessary. Many states will have to enact new policies to ensure all Title I paraprofessionals have a high school diploma or its equivalent and meet at least one of the three requirements listed above.

In addition, many states will need to collect data on the qualifications of existing paraprofessionals to ascertain the extent to which they are in compliance with the new law. States have until January 2006 to make sure all Title I paraprofessionals, regardless of hiring date, meet the above requirements. Many states will likely discover that a significant percentage of their existing paraprofessionals do not meet the requirements, and states will be challenged to find ways to assist them in doing so.

Key Policy Questions

Here are some questions for policymakers to consider:

- What policies does your state have, and what data does it collect, on paraprofessionals' qualifications?
- What percentage of Title I paraprofessionals meet the requirements of ESEA 2001? Does your state have a system to track these data accurately?
- How can you ensure all Title I paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, meet at least one of the new requirements?
- What policies or programs will your state need to enact or modify to ensure all Title I paraprofessionals meet at least one of the new requirements?
- Does your state currently administer or require school districts to administer a formal assessment of paraprofessionals' knowledge of and ability to assist in reading, writing and mathematics instruction?
- What impact will the new law have on your state's ability to recruit paraprofessionals?

Teacher Recruitment

ESEA 2001 recognizes that mandating stronger qualifications for instructional staff will not, in and of itself, achieve the goal of placing a quality teacher in every classroom. New teachers – individuals with not only strong subject-matter knowledge but also commitment – must be recruited into the profession. Title II, Part A, establishes the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund to increase the number of principals, assistant principals and highly qualified teachers in schools.

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Teaching Quality (cont'd)

State education departments must use these funds to carry out one or more of several specified activities, including, but not limited to:

- Reforming teacher and principal licensure or certification
- Establishing, expanding or improving alternative routes to licensure or certification
- Recruiting highly qualified teachers
- Assisting school districts in developing merit-based performance systems
- Providing professional development to teachers and principals
- Supporting the training of teachers to integrate technology into curricula and instruction
- Providing assistance to enable teachers to become highly qualified
- Reforming tenure systems
- Implementing teacher testing for subject-matter knowledge.

Implications for States

The nation is facing a teacher shortage, and many states are struggling with issues of teacher supply and demand. A U.S. Department of Education study estimates that an additional 2.5 million teachers will be needed over the next decade, which exceeds the current production rate of new teachers by 200,000. Some studies suggest that the actual shortfall may be as high as 870,000. The high demand for new teachers is due to several factors, including student enrollment growth and class-size reductions. Also, the teacher workforce is aging, with more and more teachers edging toward retirement; roughly half of current teachers are over the age of 45. Finally, the average length of stay in the profession is decreasing, with some 40% of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years.

In most states, the teacher shortage is as much a distribution problem as one of absolute numbers. There are shortages in specific subject areas, as well as shortages in specific schools and districts. Although there is an overall surplus of elementary school teachers, it is not easy to get these teachers to switch from one field to another. And in every state with a significant minority population, the percentage of minority teachers is far smaller than the percentage of minority students. Nationally, only 13% of teachers are from minority groups, while more than 30% of students are.

ESEA 2001 provides states with an opportunity to work aggressively toward augmenting their existing teacher corps with new, highly qualified recruits, and gives states a great deal of flexibility in deciding how to address their recruitment needs. The funds can be used to enhance traditional efforts and to explore new strategies in teacher recruitment. ESEA 2001 also authorizes a mechanism for funding and administering the Troops-to-Teachers Program, which is designed to assist eligible members of the Armed Forces to

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Teaching Quality (cont'd)

obtain teacher certification, and the Transition to Teaching program, which is designed to recruit mid-career professionals, highly qualified paraprofessionals and recent college graduates to teach in high-need schools.

Funds are also allocated in Title I to help states develop, expand or enhance high-quality alternative routes to certification. The intent of the law is to promote the entry into the teaching profession of recent college graduates and the growing number of people over the age of 25 who are interested in becoming teachers. For them, alternative routes to certification are often a more viable means of preparation. States may need to modify or enact policies not only to allow alternative routes to certification, but also ensure that program participants meet the law's definition of highly qualified. Rulemaking should clarify whether this means that those who participate in alternative routes to certification must be certified before entering the classroom.

Professional Development

Each state receiving funds under Title I, Part A, must develop a plan to ensure all teachers of core academic subjects are "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-06 school year. The plan must establish measurable objectives for each school district and school, including an annual increase in the percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development. ESEA 2001 acknowledges that successful teaching requires lifelong learning. Even the best teachers need to keep up with changes in their subject field, become acquainted with new methods of instruction, and learn how to integrate both existing and evolving technologies into their practice.

States can use funds from Title I, Part A, to provide professional development for teachers. School districts that receive subgrants under this part must use the funds to carry out one or more of several specific activities, including providing professional development to teachers, principals and paraprofessionals. Some of the professional development activities provided to teachers are those that improve their knowledge of and/or training in:

- One or more of the core academic subjects they teach
- Effective instructional strategies
- The use of state academic content standards, achievement standards and assessments
- How to teach students with disabilities, special learning needs (including students who are gifted and talented) and those with limited English proficiency
- Methods of improving student behavior
- Involving parents in their child's education
- Understanding and using data and assessments to improve classroom practice and student learning.

For more information on issues covered in this policy brief, please visit the ECS Teacher Quality Web Site at http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=129

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Teaching Quality (cont'd)

ESEA 2001 provides a highly detailed definition of the term "professional development." The definition provided in Title IX, Part A, includes activities that:

- Improve and increase the knowledge of the academic subjects teachers teach
- Enable teachers to become highly qualified
- Are an integral part of school and district improvement plans
- Give teachers, principals and administrators the knowledge and skills to help students meet challenging state academic content and achievement standards
- Improve classroom management skills
- Are high-quality, sustained, intensive and classroom-focused
- Support the recruiting, hiring and training of highly qualified teachers, including those who enter the profession through alternative routes
- Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies
- Provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology
- Are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement
- Are aligned and directly related to state academic content standards, achievement standards and assessments
- Include instruction in the use of data and assessments.

The law further states that one-day or short-term workshops or conferences are not acceptable professional development activities, and that professional development is to be based on scientifically based research. The term "scientifically based" means research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain knowledge that is reliable and valid.

Implications for States

Research still needs to be done to assess what constitutes effective professional development. There is, however, a consensus among several national organizations as to the elements of quality professional development. Organizations such as the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, the National Staff Development Council and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education agree that effective professional development has the following characteristics:

- Focuses on the intersection of content and pedagogy
- Includes opportunities for practice, research and reflection

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- Is embedded in educators' jobs and takes place during the regular school schedule
- Is sustained over time
- Reflects the principles of adult learning theory in its content and format
- Includes and fosters elements of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and principals.

In addition, if professional development is to contribute to teachers' ability to help their students master state content standards, it must be aligned with those standards.

Several states require teachers to participate in professional development activities for license renewal, and many states require that teachers participate in a certain number of clock hours of approved activities or continuing education units. These approved activities may or may not be effective, however. All too often, teachers are able to patch together an assortment of workshops and classes to fulfill the requirements – activities that are not sustained, not related to state standards and not designed to increase subject-matter knowledge. Many such activities would not meet the requirements of the new law. Thus, states may need to tighten requirements regarding the form and content of professional development activities. In addition, states can enact policies requiring alignment between professional development and school, district and state performance objectives.

Educators must have better access to professional development. Schools and districts must be much more flexible and innovative in their school calendar and school day schedule in order to allow for the highest-quality professional development. On the one hand, this means time during the school week for teachers to engage their colleagues. On the other hand, it means access to expertise that may not reside in the school or district.

Key Policy Questions

Here are some questions for policymakers to consider:

- What does your state require in terms of professional development for teachers?
- What policy modifications will be needed to ensure that professional development embodies the characteristics defined in the law and is consistent with the national consensus on what constitutes effective professional development?
- How can the state ensure access to professional development for all teachers?
- Does the school calendar include opportunities for high-quality professional development consistent with the law?
- How can states support districts in maintaining high standards for professional development?

- What incentives can be provided to encourage teachers to engage in high-quality professional development experiences?
- What policies can states enact to ensure that professional development is aligned with standards and serves school, district and state performance objectives?

Links to Other Sources

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
http://www.cpre.org

Education Commission of the States (ECS)
http://www.ecs.org

The Education Trust
http://www.edtrust.org

The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT)
http://www.npeat.org

National Staff Development Council (NSDC)
http://www.nsdc.org

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
http://www.ncrel.org/pd/

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (RNT)
http://www.rnt.org

Transition to Teaching
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SIP/programs/ttt.html

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